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THE REVIVAL OF RAILROAD BUSINESS

Most of the discussion about railroads for a long time has been centered around their troubles. Attention is now being directed to the more favorable aspects of their situation, and many railroad officers whose chief concern for years has been to reduce expenses wherever possible and sometimes where it has seemed impossible, now find their hands filled with the work of handling the business offered them, says the Railway Age Gazette.

Evidence is accumulating that the tide has turned and that general business is rapidly returning to a condition of prosperity, with good consequent effect on the welfare of the railroads and the railroad supply industry. After a long depression, followed by a considerable period of uncertainty, the change has come so suddenly as to leave some doubt for a time as to its permanency. However, while allowance must be made for the extraordinary activity in certain lines, such as the automobile business, and particularly for the stimulating effect of the large orders for war materials, the upward tendency during the past month or so has been so marked that more confidence is being manifested than at any time since the war began. This confidence is reflected not only in the statements of bankers and other prominent business men regarding the rapid improvement in general business, but in the reports of railroad traffic and earnings and the large orders for rails, locomotives, cars and other supplies that have been placed during the past few weeks by the railroads.

For August the railroads of the country reported an increase in total operating revenues of 1.3 per cent, and in net operating revenues of 10.2 per cent, per mile. This showing was made possible, of course, by the continuance of the program of drastic economy. Preliminary reports from large roads operating 117,734 miles compiled by the Interstate Commerce Commission indicate an increase in total operating revenues per mile from \$1,219 in September, 1914, to \$1,295 in September, 1915, or 6.2 per cent, and in net operating revenues per mile from \$408 to \$484, or 18 per cent. This also represents a gain, in both gross and net, over September, 1913, when a similar compilation by the commission showed that total operating revenues were \$1,235 per mile and net operating revenues were \$397 per mile, and over September, 1912, when total operating revenues were \$1,200 and net operating revenues \$424. The gross earnings reports of 32 roads available for October show increases of 8.63 for the first week, 11.98 for the second and 17.49 for the third over 1914. Any enthusiasm aroused by comparisons with 1914 should be tempered by recollection of the exceedingly poor showing made in that year; but net gains as compared with both 1912 and 1913 are gratifying indeed. In September the gross earnings of the Pennsylvania Railroad were \$20,817,361, the largest in any one month in the company's history, except August and October, 1913, and the net earnings, \$7,282,021, were the largest in any month in its history.

The earnings figures are reinforced by the increasing frequency of reports of scarcity of equipment and congestion of traffic, and by the fact that several of the largest railroads in the country have in the past few days reported record car loading figures. The Santa Fe in the week ending October 30 had the largest loaded car movement in its history, the Burlington on October 17 and 18 set a new record for 48 hours; the Pennsylvania's middle division in October broke its record for a month, and the Missouri Pacific in October had the heaviest freight traffic in its history.

If the confidence aroused by the improvement within the past few weeks is sustained, railroad men will enter upon the new year with sentiments of relief and satisfaction. But it will take many months of good business for most of the roads to make up for the effects of the depression, and for many of them even a large increase in traffic will not suffice. A railroad's condition is not determined by gross earnings alone and the recent increases in net are largely artificial. They are the result of the very rigid economies that the railroads have been

forced to practice and which cannot be continued without detriment to both service and property. The increase in traffic will entail large increases in expenses and the labor organizations are already beginning movements for an eight-hour day and for increases in rates of pay. If successful, these would cause increases in operating expenses, which, in the absence of heavy advances in rates, would soon absorb the enlarged net earnings now being shown. The improvement in conditions in the railway supply field are notable and gratifying; but, nowadays, the problems presented to the managements of the railroads in years of good business are hardly less numerous and difficult than those presented in years of bad business.

Some roads are not even in position to take full advantage of the sudden appearance of prosperity. While the shippers are clamoring for cars, many cars are not available for use, because, in some instances at least, their owners have kept themselves out of bankruptcy only by deferring expenditures for their repair until a more propitious time, and could not afford to repair them until they were sure they would be needed.

UNHYPHENATED AMERICANS

The advance of races to higher life has been through migration. The migrations of the Celt, Teutons and Slavs have changed the face of the earth and developed mankind.

The English race today, so dominant among the nations, is but the mingling of the races that migrated to the British Isles. "Saxon and Norman and Dane are we" sang the greatest of England's laureates in welcome to the mother of the British king. Indeed, Normandy itself had been peopled with the sons of Scandinavians who went to France and absorbed the life and customs of the Franks and Romans.

Six centuries later their descendants came to America with courage, audacity, faith and initiative. The struggles with forests, rivers, pestilence and bigotry strengthened their moral fiber. Their struggle with these and other obstacles made them strong against their foes without and within.

Race prejudice and friction is an obstacle in dealing with these peoples. It exists between those immigrants who retain the Old World animosities. It appears also in disaffection between the older Americans and the latest arrivals. The foreign names prominent in labor disturbances and various civil commotions suggest a warning that Americans may well heed.

Shall we show faith or fear? Shall the condition paralyze our efforts or inspire us to plan for the many-sided civilization of these people?

The immigrant is the pioneer of his nation. Bolder than his fellows who remain at home, these men are the scouts, explorers and adventurers, pressing like Columbus toward the West to discover new paths. Their keen eyes may see here what men who have long dwelt here have not seen, because strangers often detect hidden values in what was commonplace to the everyday beholder. Their eyes are microscopic, their minds alert, their muscles tough, the senses unspoiled by luxuries, and they are quickly responsive to novel interests. They are raw material of saints and giants of later days. They have fought our wars and they will fight our bloodless battles for peace and purity. Out of their number will come our prophets that shall emancipate the captives of industry and bind all conflicting factions together with golden bonds of love and truth.

Recently the "Oregon family" at the Panama-Pacific exposition took occasion to show their appreciation of the services of Commissioner R. A. Booth, and the personal esteem in which he was held by his associates. This honor was well bestowed, since Mr. Booth has devoted much time to the affairs of the exposition, and is one of Oregon's really large men—a businessman of capacity and a citizen of the most valuable type. His work, and that of the other commissioners and those employed by them, has been effective in making Oregon's exhibit at the exposition stand out prominently among the states which have participated, and if there is any virtue in this kind of advertising Oregon should be much benefitted by the desirable publicity gained. The appropriation was not a large one but it seems to have been so well and carefully handled by the commission that the showing made was much better than that of some other states with a great deal more money at their command.

The meeting of the Commercial Club held last night was encouraging because it was well attended and the proceedings were of an earnest character. Reports of the heads of bureaus showed commendable activity and a reasonable measure of accomplishment. These monthly membership meetings will do much toward making the organization effective if the advice of President Hamilton is taken to fight out differences of opinion frankly and openly and refrain from street criticism. The club belongs to all the members and it will be what they choose to make of it. The real center of all the city's civic and commercial activities is what it should be, and we believe that is what it is destined to become under the present scheme of organization.

Why should those dandy English officers be expected to neglect the tennis court in order to hurry reserves to the assistance of the fighting men in the trenches? They have been educated as dudes and not as fighting men.

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Peterson's Reply.

Editor Capital Journal, Salem, Oregon. Dear Sir: I observed in your valuable paper of the edition of the 8th instant an article signed by County Judge Bushey. From the fact that I am the principal topic discussed in the article I infer that it was intended as a reply to my communication of a few days previous relative to the retention of the services of the county agriculturist. The article seems to invite a reply.

The first charge against me is that I "hounded" the county court. It is true I have appeared before the county court with reference to certain matters but everything concerning which I appeared before the court was a matter properly coming before that tribunal. If I manifested any interest in the matter whatever I could only do it by appearing there. There was no place else I could go. I would like to know how long it has been a crime to appear before the county court with reference to public business. Judge Bushey's article may be subject to the inference that I sought to procure county funds for my own use but such is not the case and Judge Bushey will not take the responsibility of flatly saying it is.

I appeared before the county court with other people of my community to get a road improved so we could obtain a rural route. We had voted and paid special taxes for the improvement and we felt we were entitled to it. The court felt differently and since the weather set in the road is all but impassable. I also appeared before the court, with some of my neighbors to get the boundaries of our school district changed. Was that a crime? There was no other place we could go. We certainly had no desire to hound the court. We endeavored to present our proposition in a respectful manner and we accepted the decision with as much grace as we could.

The statement that I later "joined Ringo in working off a grand jury whitewash on the public" is equally false. Mr. Ringo had absolutely nothing to do with the report of the grand jury. He even refused to be present when the witnesses were examined, which formed the basis of the report for fear his presence might influence the testimony of the witness and when the investigation was completed he refused to assist us in the preparation of the report. That report was made by the grand jury whose membership consisted of some of the most responsible citizens of the county and was founded upon an impartial investigation of the matter it referred to. We did not expect Judge Bushey to agree with us because his malicious enmity towards Ringo has blinded him to such an extent that he cannot see the truth but we were hopeful that by calling attention to the illegal expenditure of public funds in the manner stated it would result in a saving to the taxpayers.

Judge Bushey is not in a position to complain because the time spent in making the investigation was paid for with the taxpayers money because his conduct started the investigation. He asked permission to appear before the grand jury and with an evident desire to humiliate Mr. Ringo, the district attorney, he poured forth a volley of defamation against him. Could we ignore the charges he made? If true they were serious and the public should be advised. If we found the charges true would Judge Bushey have objected to the time we spent? His complaint in that respect is due to the fact that the grand jury are a careful and impartial investigation of the matter found the charges untrue and made by him in bad faith.

Judge Bushey's charge that I have tried to align one part of the county against the other is also false. I challenge him to cite one sentence from my article in which he pretends to answer which could be so construed. I simply tried to point out the advantages of

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retaining the county agriculturist. If lines. If scientific farming is of no my reasons were unsound surely they advantage we ought to dispense with could be answered if an answer were that burden. I do not care whether deemed advisable, in the same manner Mr. Chapin personally is retained. He they were given and do not call for a fact of a large number of people that he is thoroughly competent but if lot of personal abuse of Mr. Chapin, myself or any other person. The county agriculturist is of just as much advantage to one part of the county as another. Hence there is no occasion for arraying one part of the county against the other. Many of the farmers of the county have been benefitted by receiving Mr. Chapin's advice. The commercial club of Salem is composed of the leading business men of that city. They have nothing to gain by having a county agriculturist unless it benefits the farmers. The fact that they have advanced their own cash in order that the farmers could have the benefit of Mr. Chapin's assistance and that they are unanimously urging its retention certainly proves that he must have demonstrated his worth to them. Surely Judge Bushey will not question their intelligence and as they could have no improper motive in desiring to have him retained their judgment should have great weight.

If there are any farmers opposed to having a county agriculturist I cannot help but feel that they have not availed themselves of his services and do not know the value derived from receiving his advice but even if he is no advantage to them they ought not to insist on depriving us who are benefitted by his suggestions from having them. We maintain a large institution and pay a large corps of teachers to educate our children along agricultural

Judge Bushey's "suspicion" is as baseless as his accusation and if he will call at my place I will show him the original of my article in my own hand writing.

Yours very truly,
E. W. PETERSON.

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Further information as to tickets, etc., from local agents.

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